Memorandum by State Secretary Bülow in German Foreign Office, February 19, 1934

Source: Dieter Albrecht, ed., *Der Notenwechsel Zwischen dem Heiligen Stuhl und der Deutschen Reichsregierung* [Diplomatic Note Exchange Between the Holy See and the German Reich Government] (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1965-1980), vol. 3, pp. 19-20

Translation of the German original:

In a visit today the Nuncio brought up the issue that in the Diocese of Mainz the flag question has taken a distressing turn. The Bishop of Mainz has apparently been the only one in Germany to allow the national flags to be hoisted on the churches on the designated occasions. Once he noticed that in the rest of Germany only the Church flags were displayed, he gave instructions that in the future his diocese would proceed in that manner as well. Thereupon, however, an order was promulgated for Hesse and specifically for the 30th of January – signed by Jung – whereby the national flags were to be displayed on the churches next to the Church flag. The Bishop submitted to this order. He felt it distressing, however, that a different rule was in effect for Hesse than for the other German states. The Nuncio mentioned that Herr von Papen is already involved in this question. He went on to say that the Bishop of Mainz is in a distressing situation that he feels is extraordinarily difficult. He is being unjustly accused of separatist inclinations, and during Mardi Gras 30 people even dressed up as Frenchmen and serenaded him with French music.

In the same connection, the Nuncio mentioned that despite the statement of Herr Reich Chancellor that Catholic seminarians need not participate in work service and military-type physical training, they are nevertheless being required to do so in Münster. He did not go into details, but only said further that the intentions and instructions of Herr Reich Chancellor apparently were not always properly understood and properly carried out in the provinces.

Notes: The Bishop of Mainz, Ludwig Maria Hugo, took the strongest position of any German Bishop against Catholics participating in the Nazi Party in the early 1930s, before the Nazis came to power. He stood out for denying a Catholic funeral for a Nazi Gauleiter (district Party boss), Peter Gemeinder, in 1931, for criticizing Nazi antisemitism publicly and for citing the Vatican’s 1928 condemnation of antisemitism in reference to the Nazi Party’s antisemitism. For reasons not explained, Bishop Hugo was the signatory of the German Bishops’ joint statement of March 1933 withdrawing prohibitions on Catholics joining the Nazi Party.

Mainz was the diocesan see within the State of Hesse. Mainz had been the largest and most important diocese in Germany from the early Middle Ages until the early 19th century.

Franz von Papen was Vice Chancellor of Germany under Hitler from January 1933 until July 1934. A prominent Catholic, with a virtually all-Catholic staff, Papen stated in his memoirs that his office often intervened when complaints arose about Nazi actions throughout the country. It does not appear that he objected to major features of the Nazi security state such as Dachau, other concentration camps, or other brutality against Jews and political opponents. Nevertheless, when Papen was tried for crimes against humanity at Nuremberg, he was acquitted.